News release

Christmas weather – will it or won't it snow?

17 December 2004

Met Office forecasters are saying today that the chances of snow on Christmas Day 2004 are definitely in the balance as weather patterns for the big day look set to keep sledges on standby across the UK.

With over a week to go, the forecast is for unsettled weather running up to Christmas and even the possibility of snow through the coming weekend. The likelihood of a white Christmas for some parts of the UK has significantly increased with northern parts of Britain the most likely to see snowfall during the holiday period.

The last time we had a white Christmas with snow falling across the UK was 2001, but this was mainly confined to high ground, 1995 was a good year for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and northern England.

Climate change has brought higher average temperatures over land and sea through recent decades and this generally reduces the chances of a white Christmas. However, the natural variability of the weather will not stop cold, snowy winters happening in the future. In fact, in terms of widespread sleet/snow falling across the UK on Christmas Day, between 1971 and 1992 there was only one year (1980), whereas in the years 1993 to 2003 there were five such occasions.

Latest forecast for the UK

Are you dreaming of a white Christmas?

For further information:
Met Office Press Office +44 (0)1392 886655
E-mail: pressoffice@metoffice.gov.uk

Met Office Customer Centre 0870 900 0100
If you're outside the UK +44 (0)1392 885680

PRINTABLE VERSION

About
Met Office
Hadley Centre
International role
Library and archive
How to find us
Job vacancies
Contract opportunities
Terms and conditions
Accessibility

News
News release archive
Media Centre

Learn
About the weather
From the bookshelf

Services
Mobile forecasts
Weathercall
Marinecall
Monthly Outlook
MetWEB withdrawal
Talk to a forecaster

Contact
Contact us
FAQ

© Crown copyright